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BOOK REVIEWS



IN CHARGE OF

M. E. CAMERON, R.N.

PRIVATE DUTY NURSING. By Katharine DeWitt, R.N., Graduate of Mount Holyoke Seminary and of The Illinois Training School for Nurses; Assistant Editor, *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*. Price, \$1.50. J. B. Lippincott Company, London and Philadelphia.

The days when nursing offered sanctuary to those who entered the calling seem to have passed away, if one may judge by the hostility of the criticism that constantly assails the profession of the trained nurse. We hear accusations that she is overtrained; we hear that she is kept, virtually the unpaid servant of municipality or corporation with neither time for study, nor efficient teaching; we hear that clinical records and other clerical work take up her time, other than the personal care of the patient. We hear too, that the efforts of nurses to correct and maintain their standards by legislation meet with stubborn opposition and bewildering obtuseness on the part of the guardians of the public welfare.

Against such discord it is indeed refreshing to find one who sets forth with no uncertain sound the original principles upon which our profession is founded; the true ethical relationship of the nurse to her patient, calling for ideals which allow no abatement of the standards cherished by all earnest nurses. That such a book comes to us from the very centre of nursing thought, as mirrored by the national organ of nursing, makes just so much more authoritative its teaching.

Claiming that the best teaching to be had is not likely to injure by overtraining, Miss DeWitt seems to regard as of foremost importance the amount of character the nurse brings for training when she enters her school, and to personal character she looks for the solution of the problems that confront the private duty nurse, when she assumes the obligations laid upon her in the care of her patients. Miss DeWitt makes one aware that, in a sense, the term pioneer nurse is not one that is to be restricted in the usual way, since every nurse who starts on a case is liable to find herself in tracks that are all untrodden. The experience may be hitherto unknown to the patient and the process of educating her, and the entire household is as new as when nursing first

began. To this process Miss DeWitt brings every consideration of the multiple circumstances that may arise, and proves herself able for them all.

The spirit of commercialism has been said to dominate nursing, but this book goes far to evidence the contrary. The self-abnegation of "a religious" is demanded of those who would enter the field of private duty nursing, and no religious order could be more insistent of the need of self-discipline and self-control than is the author. She says: "It requires the highest moral and spiritual graces to carry a nurse through some situations without discredit to her calling or reflection on herself." And yet one lays down the book with a distinctly greater enthusiasm for this same difficult vocation; with a larger conviction of the opportunities it offers; with a desire to stay with it, and work for it, rather than to seize upon the chance offered of escaping from it.

Surely the bulk of criticism against our profession must emanate from darkly pessimistic sources and from those who judge of the whole body from isolated individual cases. We are glad to feel that Miss DeWitt represents the great majority and that the number will increase with the circulation of her book. The young nurses will find it a safe guide in all sorts and conditions of untried experiences; and for the old and weary there are hints for rehabilitation which may open to them a large door.

REFERENCE HAND-BOOK FOR NURSES. By Amanda K. Beck, Graduate of The Illinois Training School for Nurses. Third Edition, Revised and Enlarged. Price, \$1.25 net. W. B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia and London.

Revised to date, this little book appears as formerly in flexible red leather with gilt lettering. The new edition has dispensed with some methods, and in their place gives the newer treatment that has superseded the old.

GYNÆCOLOGY FOR NURSES AND GYNÆCOLOGICAL NURSING. By Comyns Berkley, M.A., M.D., B.C. (Cantab.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.), M.R.C.S. (Eng.). Second Edition. Price, 2/6 net. The Scientific Press, Ltd., 28, 29 Southampton St. Strand, London, W. C.

This little book, which seems to have met with a favorable reception in England, appears in its second edition to be little changed since its first appearance—its matter being confined to the briefest outlines.